

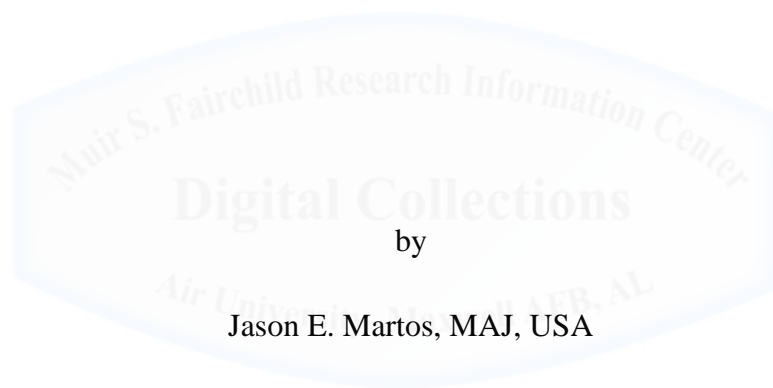
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AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

# **UNCOMFORTABLE EXPERIENCE**

- LESSONS LOST IN THE APACHE WAR -



by

Jason E. Martos, MAJ, USA

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## INTRODUCTION

The study of history serves multiple purposes. From the military perspective, history provides the opportunity to apply lessons from the past to meet modern challenges. After action reviews leverage immediate history, but the lessons are often anecdotal. Absent context, they may only apply to the current operating environment. Study of historical campaigns provides context and the ability to test hypotheses against multiple situations to determine if they merit doctrinal consideration. Unfortunately, broadly characterizing the era of conflict that supported United States western expansion as the *Indian Wars* created the popular misperception that the many wars fought on the North American continent, against multiple Native American nations, to secure the present day boundaries of the United States were nothing more than a series of battles in a broad campaign through American soil. This misrepresentation of history, along with the uncomfortable methods that western expansion adopted, contributed to the military's reluctance to incorporate the lessons learned through over a century of warfare into modern practices.<sup>1</sup>

This paper seeks to use the Apache War as a case study to demonstrate some of the valuable lessons lost to history. Far from a simple one-season campaign, the Apache War gripped the focus of American and Mexican citizens throughout Arizona, New Mexico, Chihuahua, and Sonora for a period greater than twenty-five years.<sup>2</sup> Study of the campaigns reveals valuable insights implicating the necessity of cultural awareness at all levels of command. These lessons continue to retain their relevance to war planners and decision makers, and deserve consideration along with contemporary examples of asymmetric warfare.<sup>3</sup>

## CULTURAL AWARENESS

In many respects, when Americans conceive of the Apache Indians they envision the Chiricahua band. This statement rings as true today as in February, 1861 at the onset of the Apache War. In reality, the *Indeh* included several bands of American Indians that spanned the southwest with a combined population of around six thousand people.<sup>4</sup> The Chiricahua settled largely in Southeastern Arizona and portions of New Mexico, and Northern Sonora and Chihuahua.<sup>5</sup> Although confusion exists as to their true subdivisions, the Chokonon led by Cochise, the Chihenne (Ojo Caliente/Hot Springs) led by Victorio, the Bedonkohe led by Mangas Coloradas, and the Nednhi led by Juh are generally accepted as accurate inclusions. At the very least, strong bonds existed between the four groups and they frequently lived together, raided, and went to war as allies.<sup>6</sup>

United States soldiers and Chiricahua warriors exchanged shots as the Apache War began in 1861. Despite campaigns directed against each of the Apache bands, the Chiricahua leaders continued to dominate the narratives throughout the war.<sup>7</sup> In a fitting manner, the Chiricahua Apache under Naiche concluded the final peace with General Miles on September 4, 1886.<sup>8</sup> However, Naiche did not surrender for the entirety of the Apache bands. He had no influence beyond the Chiricahua, but as circumstances dictated, by that time only his people remained unconquered.

General Miles likely understood this at the time Naiche surrendered to him. After all, the United States only targeted the Chiricahua band for movement east as prisoners of war. The rest of the Apache bands remained on their reservations in Arizona and New Mexico.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, it took twenty-five years for the United States' leadership, both military and civilian, to begin to understand the tribal relationships and culture of the Apache. In the

meantime, multiple examples of ignorance exacerbated conditions between the two nations.

Two events stand out in particular: The Bascom Affair and the decision to consolidate all of the Apache bands onto the San Carlos reservation.

### **--THE BASCOM AFFAIR--**

In January 1861, raiders from the Arivaipa group of the Western Apache band descended upon John Ward's ranch in present day Sonoita, Arizona. They made off with approximately twenty head of cattle, and perhaps most importantly, Ward's twelve year old stepson, Felix.<sup>10</sup> During their exfiltration, the Arivaipa likely laid a false trail to the east to avoid suspicion before heading to their homes along Arivaipa Creek to the North. In any event, Mr. Ward, who had not been present at the attack itself, identified their spoor and immediately blamed Cochise for the incident.<sup>11</sup> He reported as such to Lieutenant Colonel Pitcairn Morrison at nearby Fort Buchanan, who responded by ordering Lieutenant George N. Bascom to pursue the Apaches and use the force under his command to recover the stolen property and Felix Ward.<sup>12</sup>

At the outset, neither party expected the sequence of events that would follow. For Bascom, recovering lost property captured during an Apache raid was a common task. Although Bascom had never participated in direct actions with the Apache himself, by 1861 the Army grew accustomed to policing the Southwest, and likely would have viewed the Ward incident as routine.<sup>13</sup> The one difference in this circumstance may have been Cochise himself.

Apache culture revolved around the practice of raiding, which they depended upon for sustenance to support their nomadic lifestyle. They learned early that established agricultural communities and fixed rancherias meant extinction for their peoples. Not only did the terrain make it difficult to sustain large communities, but fixed sites provided vulnerable targets for Ute and Comanche war parties in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The level of

violence and destruction visited upon the Apache by the Utes and Comanches in this period dwarfed their losses to Mexican and American forces in the nineteenth century. Of the fourteen Apache groups that ranged as far north as present day Nebraska, and well into central Texas, only the Jicarilla survived the brutal onslaught and retained possession of a small portion of their original land.<sup>14</sup> The remaining Apache bands learned a valuable lesson; survival depended on mobility, concealment, and resourcefulness.

In the three years after Cochise first met with the United States' Apache agent, Michael Steck, he and his Chokonon had become the most well known group in the region. Anytime violence occurred, he generally received credit for the raid whether or not he played a role. There are several explanations for this, but primarily, Cochise continued to raid after agreeing to let the Butterfield stage line cross through Apache Pass.<sup>15</sup> The Apache had a difficult time comprehending that the various United States and Mexican settlements shared common governance. Therefore, while Cochise had agreed upon peaceful relations surrounding Apache Pass, he likely did not understand that residents outside of that region fell under the same protections.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, American settlers at the time could not grasp that Apache bands operated autonomously. Cochise and his Chokonon often drew accusations simply because his name carried the most notoriety and most settlers saw him as the Apaches' leader.<sup>17</sup> The Apache criminal justice system provides yet another explanation for the Chokonon receiving credit for so many depredations during the period when Cochise tried to live at peace with the Americans. When Apaches committed crimes against their own people, the group exiled them. These exiles could not seek refuge with other groups, so they often banded together to form their own support structures. Frequently, the official bands received credit for raids committed by their exiled members.<sup>18</sup> At any rate, although John Ward lacked physical evidence of Cochise's involvement



at the time, Lieutenant Colonel Morrison had ample reason to investigate his claim and little reason to suspect that his orders would inadvertently trigger all-out war.

Several factors indicate that Cochise did not view Bascom as a threat when he arrived at Apache Pass on February 3, 1861 with John Ward in tow as his interpreter and fifty four soldiers of Charlie Company, Seventh Infantry under his command. Undoubtedly, Cochise knew of their approach well before Bascom arrived. Cochise held the high ground around Apache Pass, and would have been able to identify their column. However, rather than assuming a defensive posture, the Chokonon continued to trade openly with United States soldiers in vicinity of Apache Pass, and approach them without reservation.<sup>19</sup> Cochise himself provided the strongest evidence that he suspected no ill will from the approaching force.

When Cochise went to meet Bascom in his camp, he brought his family in tow. Cochise arrived with his brother Coyuntura, two of his nephews, and most notably his wife Dos-teh-seh (daughter of Mangus Coloradas), and two of their children.<sup>20</sup> Most accounts indicate his sons Naiche and Taza attended. However, in an interview with Eve Ball, Juh's son, Daklugie, indicated that Cochise had brought an infant, possibly suggesting one of his daughters since Naiche was already four years old at that point.<sup>21</sup> Clearly, regardless of which children Cochise chose to accompany him to meet with Bascom, he did not expect that he placed any of his party in peril. Had he suspected the events to come, he likely would have selected more than one of his warriors for the meeting and left his family behind.

Bascom and Cochise met on the morning of February 4, 1861 at Bascom's camp in Apache Pass. Bascom took Cochise and the adult males (Coyuntura, his nephews, and the unnamed warrior) with him into his tent, and instructed his soldiers to form a security perimeter around the site. Through Ward, Bascom accused Cochise of conducting the raid and required

that he return Felix Ward. Cochise denied any involvement, but offered to identify the guilty party and bring the boy back if the lieutenant would grant him ten days to account for travel to and from the Black Mountains where he thought the Ward boy to be. Bascom refused, and instead informed Cochise that he would be held prisoner, along with his family, until he returned Felix Ward. At this point, Cochise drew his knife, and cut his way out of the tent, accompanied by the un-named warrior. The warrior fell victim to one of the guards' bayonets, but Cochise managed to escape.<sup>22</sup>

Over the next several weeks, conditions devolved rapidly as Cochise attempted first to intimidate Bascom into releasing his family, then seeing that fail, looked for opportunities to collect hostages as leverage to secure their release.<sup>23</sup> When that failed too, Cochise sought vengeance. Prior to breaking camp and removing the remaining Chiricahua to safety in preparation for war, Cochise ordered the execution of his hostages.<sup>24</sup> Events culminated on February 19, 1861. In retaliation for Cochise's actions, Bascom ordered his soldiers to hang the Chiricahua chief's brother and nephews, along with three additional Apache prisoners captured by his command in the previous weeks. He then took Cochise's wife and children back to Fort Buchanan with him, where the Army eventually released them.<sup>25</sup>

Why did a routine policing action devolve into to what Cochise later termed, "a very great wrong" committed by Bascom and his soldiers that motivated Cochise and the Chiricahua Apache to unite in war against the United States?<sup>26</sup> Immediate narratives developed that blamed Bascom for incompetence. Soldiers across the Southwest lamented his actions that February in Apache Pass.<sup>27</sup> In an account published in the *Missouri Republican* on December 27, 1861, a soldier stationed at Fort Lyon in northern New Mexico demonstrated how far news of Bascom's failure spread in a relatively short period. The soldier's account strips away any mention of

Cochise's role in the affair and lays full responsibility of the event and everything that followed on Bascom.<sup>28</sup> Modern narratives that recount the Bascom Affair typically adopt a similar tone. Until recently, historians have provided very little consideration as to what conditions drove Bascom to adopt the course of action he chose.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps Sergeant Daniel Robinson's interpretation of Bascom's actions provides the best starting point for serious military inquiry. "Young officers were often entrusted with important duties, the execution of which affected their military standing more or less ever afterwards... The first paragraph in Army regulations explains the manner in which orders shall be obeyed, and in this spirit, Lieutenant Bascom tried to carry out his orders."<sup>30</sup> In other words, Bascom did his best to execute the mission that his commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Pitcairn Morrison, gave him. But it is the first part of his statement that gets to the heart of the matter. If young officers were frequently entrusted with significant responsibilities, for which the consequences of failure could potentially lead to war, what did the Army do to prepare their officers for these missions? After all, if the argument can be made that a more seasoned officer would have reacted differently, then it stands to reason that, that officer must have understood something more than Bascom, which means that something in Bascom's development may have been lacking.

Ultimately, the Bascom Affair broke down during negotiations in Bascom's tent. Granted, tactical mistakes may have led them to that point. After all, Charlie Company clearly lost spoor (assuming that they ever identified a trail east in the first place) and failed to identify when the Arivaipa party changed direction, but upon arrival at Apache Pass conditions for successful engagement still presented themselves to the young lieutenant. Even without too

much conjecture, using only statements from those physically present in the tent, one can piece together critical factors that led to the failed leader engagement.

Foremost, Morrison and Bascom made a critical error in their choice of interpreters. John Ward understood nothing of the Apache language or culture, and had poor control of the Spanish language that the mission relied upon to communicate with Cochise. More importantly, Ward approached the situation heavily invested in the outcome, and clearly biased as to who he thought bore responsibility for the raid on his property. Bascom paid for his decision to use Ward immediately, as Ward insulted Cochise the moment he stepped foot in the tent.<sup>31</sup> Bascom's next critical error came when he questioned Cochise's integrity. Whether Bascom accused Cochise directly, or Ward took it upon himself to translate the message that he wanted to share, is irrelevant. Cochise took the insult to heart.<sup>32</sup> At best, this provides further evidence against using John Ward for the mission, a fault for which Bascom bears responsibility. Also, as a West Point graduate, he likely understood enough of the conversation between Ward and Cochise to know what Ward translated. Bascom missed a pivotal opportunity for cooperation through his refusal to accept that Cochise may have been telling the truth about his involvement in the raid.

Finally, Bascom crossed the point of no return when he attempted to arrest Cochise and hold his family hostage. Bascom (as did Sergeant Robinson) likely felt that his orders from Morrison dictated this last move. Bascom's orders required that he "demand the immediate restoration of the stolen property [and in case Cochise should fail to make restitution] was authorized and instructed to use the force under his orders to recover it."<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, Bascom only knew one manner of applying force. His experiences to date had not taught him more creative means of coercion.

Based on these examples, Bascom lacked the skills required to perform the mission that Lieutenant Colonel Morrison ordered him to accomplish: Diplomacy, negotiation, and cultural awareness. West Point certainly did not develop these skills in the officers that they commissioned. Their curriculum focused heavily on math and science, neither of which proved much use to Bascom in Apache Pass.<sup>34</sup> If Bascom had arrived at Apache Pass fresh off of the trip from the Hudson, it would be fair to lay the blame squarely on his military academy background, but Bascom did not graduate from West Point in 1860. He graduated the Academy as part of the class of 1858, and had already been an officer for three years when he confronted Cochise. In fact, he had been operating in the Trans-Mississippi West since approximately May of 1859 and served under Morrison's command since the summer of 1860.<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, the Army had three years to professionally develop Bascom, to share with him the knowledge that would have allowed a more seasoned officer to successfully negotiate with Cochise to recover John Ward's property and son. Unfortunately, none of his superior officers felt the endeavor merited consideration.

### **--HELL'S FORTY ACRES--**

*"Fort Thomas was accredited the worst army post in the domains of Uncle Sam, and merited its reputation during the few months I spent there. But San Carlos won unanimously our designation of it as 'Hell's Forty Acres'" -- Britton Davis<sup>36</sup>*

If the Bascom Affair demonstrated the value of developing culturally aware junior officers, the United States' "removal policy" that sought to consolidate the Apache bands onto the San Carlos Reservation provides the sister argument that demonstrates the value of

developing culturally aware leaders at the most senior levels. Although history has provided evidence that the removal policy received significant support from contractors and unethical individuals looking to profit from further seizure of Apache lands, it does not explain how they successfully influenced decision makers to adopt a policy that would lead to an additional eleven years of war.<sup>37</sup> The decision to consolidate the Apache contributed directly to the Victorio War, the Loco and Geronimo campaigns, and the Nana and Chatto-Chihuahua raids that followed.<sup>38</sup> Once again, failure to contend with Apache culture would result in further warfare and bloodshed throughout the deserts of the southwest.

The removal policy had three principal flaws from a cultural perspective. First, it failed to comprehend the level of attachment that the Chiricahua Apache had to the land. From 1868 onward, Cochise established the need for a reservation on the Chokonen native lands in the Chiricahua Mountains around Apache Pass as a requirement for peace with the United States.<sup>39</sup> Cochise was not alone in this regard, Victorio made similar overtures when the government tried to displace his peoples from Ojo Caliente in October 1878.<sup>40</sup> In both instances, when John Clum effected the Chiricahua's transfer from Apache Pass to San Carlos and when Captain F.T. Bennett attempted to transfer Victorio's Warm Springs group from their home in New Mexico surrounding Ojo Caliente, the Chiricahua leaders fled government control and resumed raiding.<sup>41</sup>

Many of the United States' failures to understand the Apache's connection to their native lands stem from deeply ingrained misperceptions perpetrated by American expansionists in the 1840s that led to Manifest Destiny. The myth that the Trans-Mississippi West was full of empty lands, just waiting for white settlers to civilize and cultivate them, seemed to be validated by the Apaches' chosen nomadic lifestyle. Even had they noticed that Apache bands exhibited strong regional ties, the Apaches' seeming unwillingness to cultivate the land and build permanent

domiciles only further reinforced that they were not making appropriate use of the resources.<sup>42</sup>

Policy makers never understood that the Apache Indians developed their nomadic practices as a means to survive.

In reality, the Apache had significantly strong religious ties to their native lands. They believed that Usen (God) created their lands and their people together to form a symbiotic relationship. Geronimo explained the relationship in his autobiography, “For each tribe of men Usen created, he also made a home. In the land created for any particular tribe he placed what would be best for the welfare of that tribe... When they are taken from these homes they sicken and die...” Later in life, Geronimo firmly believed that if the Apache remained in custody at Fort Sill, dispersed across native Comanche and Kiowa lands, they would eventually all perish.<sup>43</sup>

Not only did the United States choose to remove the Chiricahua from lands originally promised to them, but they moved them to an overcrowded reservation incapable of sustaining their way of life. The Apache, nomadic peoples dependent on hunting wild game, and gathering wild fruits, nuts, and herbs that their homelands provided, now had to learn how to survive through sustained agricultural practices on “Hell’s forty acres.” Except, as Britton Davis pointed out from his time at San Carlos, the ground was essentially barren, dusty, waste land, and the Apache possessed neither the means nor the resources for cultivating it to any great extent.<sup>44</sup>

Jason Betzinez identified another problem with the San Carlos reservation. The Chiricahua Apaches grew bored. Agriculture failed to yield credible returns, and even if it had, the Chiricahua had little interest in the practice. They used to roam freely, often great distances, to raid or hunt wild game. The life of a farmer had little appeal to the warriors.<sup>45</sup>

The second mistake that the United States removal policy embodied was assuming that all of the Western Apache bands, Chiricahua Bands, and their associate groups could live at

peace with each other. As if removing the Chiricahua from their ancestral lands and denying them any means of sustaining their preferred lifestyle did not provide enough of a motivation for the Apaches to leave the reservation, the United States also wanted the Chiricahua to share the land with other Apache with whom they naturally feuded. The fact that the United States continued to employ the Apache warriors on the reservations as scouts to help hunt down their fellow tribesmen only added to problem.<sup>46</sup>

The United States' political and military leaders never understood the political connections between the Apache bands. Even when discussing the subdivisions of the Chiricahua, Geronimo and Daklugie only considered the Chokonen to be true Chiricahua. They viewed the Nednhi, Bedonkohe, and Chihenne as different bands altogether. However, they are clear about the fact that the four groups shared alliances, whereas they openly admit tenuous relationships with the Western Apache that sometimes led to war.<sup>47</sup> Placing them on the reservation and asking them to forget centuries of history had little chance of success.

Finally, because of the manner in which the government chose to implement the policy, the military and civilian leadership experienced a complete breakdown in their unity of effort. The end state kept shifting. Reservations that had once been approved and provided the Apache an opportunity to settle and start over were now being reclaimed, and the officers that had struck the original agreements and treaties were left looking like liars. The Chiricahua placed a high value on trust, honor, and integrity. The series of reclamations that consolidated the tribes on San Carlos called into question every promise made by the United States government and their troops to the Apache.<sup>48</sup> Britton Davis described the feeling as he walked the grounds of San Carlos, "Everywhere the sullen, stolid, hopeless, suspicious face of the older Indians challenging



you. You felt the challenge in your very marrow - that unspoken challenge to prove yourself anything else than one more liar and thief...”<sup>49</sup>

Prior to the United States’ removal policy, the Apache had lived at peace with the Americans, content on the lands granted them in their treaties. Cochise passed away on June 8, 1874, but the truce that he struck remained in place another two years until John Clum arrived at Apache Pass on June 4, 1876, causing Geronimo and Juh to flee with somewhere between four and six hundred Chiricahua Apache into the Sonoran desert.<sup>50</sup> The remaining Apache arrived at San Carlos, to a place they described as, “the worst place in all the great territories stolen from the Apaches...It was so unfit for the officers and troops that it was considered a good place for the Apaches - a good place for them to die.”<sup>51</sup>

Transfer to San Carlos stripped the Apache of their cherished homelands, deprived them of any possibility to adhere to their nomadic roots, and nearly broke their humanity as they lay idle, essentially caged in captivity and beholden to government rations for basic sustenance requirements. On October 24, 1882, the Tucson *Star* published the findings of a federal grand jury investigation into the state of affairs at San Carlos. The report called the San Carlos Reservation a disgrace, and blamed the Indian agent, J.C. Tiffany, for “more misery and loss of life in the region than all other causes combined,” essentially blaming the administration of the San Carlos agency for each of the Apache outbreaks.<sup>52</sup> While corruption in the system certainly played a large role, it did not explain everything. Certainly, even had the San Carlos reservation been managed with the utmost level of integrity and efficiency, it would not have resolved the fact that the Apache had no choice but to leave their fruitful tribal lands and submit to life at San Carlos. It would not have changed the fact that the government forced them to live in overcrowded conditions with their traditional rivals, and it would not have restored their trust in

the United States' ability to maintain their promises. The United States' failure to understand the Apache culture and analyze the effects that the removal policy would have on their tenuous peace, directly led to the another ten years of war.

## **CONCLUSION**

The formal concepts of operational variables and civil considerations did not exist during the Apache War, but that does not mean that the political and military leaders of the time did not wrestle with the implications of poorly understanding the Apache culture. The Bascom Affair and the United States' Removal Policy are only two examples of the extreme consequences of failing to understand your opponent's culture, selected to demonstrate the consequences at the lowest and highest levels of responsibility respectively. At the lowest level, a young Army lieutenant's actions during a critical key leader engagement led to war between the United States and the Apache nation. Professional military education and officer professional development failed to prepare Bascom for his mission. Unfortunately, young company grade officers continue to face this challenge in modern conflicts, often with similar results.

Lieutenants and captains frequently interact with key leaders in the operational environment. Their interpersonal skills often dictate whether or not the population supports their presence in an area. Current doctrine finally recognized this fact in the Counter-Insurgency manual, and made cultural awareness training a key component in unit readiness training. However, it should not have been necessary to make the same mistakes in present wars, for the Army to re-learn the importance of cultural awareness training for junior leaders. Bascom's experience clearly indicated the consequences of failing to prepare. Had he understood Apache

culture and known how to negotiate diplomatically, Bascom could have gained Cochise's cooperation. Instead, he earned the great chief's ire.

At the highest levels, the United States' removal policy shares many parallels with the Bush administration's decision to implement de-Ba'athification and disband the Iraqi national army in Iraq following Operation Iraqi Freedom. In both instances, the government failed to recognize the implications of their decisions, which were based on gross over-simplifications of cultural understanding. The government failed to understand Apache tribal relationships, their relationship to their territory of origin, or their aversion to sustained agriculture. The San Carlos reservation, better known as "Hell's forty acres", was never going to provide a sustainable lifestyle for the Apache bands. Even if the ground could be cultivated without extensive preparation, the Apache bands did not trust each other and found it difficult to live together in peace. Unfortunately, the government implemented their policy without fully understanding the impending consequences, leading to another decade of war.

This paper focused on the United States' challenges with understanding and adjusting to Apache culture, but there are other lessons that the Apache War provides insight into as well. In particular, the difficulty of pacifying an enemy that maintains the advantage of concealment and the effectiveness of employing the tenets of mission command in asymmetric warfare deserve additional study. The Nana and Chatto-Chihuahua raids clearly demonstrate the challenges that Army scouts had in pacifying a handful of Apache warriors who maintained the ability to disappear into the terrain. Geronimo's final campaigns also provide excellent source material. In modern asymmetric environments, concealment continues to be a major factor that limits the effectiveness of government forces. However, instead of disappearing into the wilderness,

modern insurgents blend into civilian populations. Lessons from these campaigns have clear implications that planners should consider as they estimate manpower and time requirements for future conflicts. Additionally, the Crook offensives from 1872 to 1873 that resulted in the pacification of Apacheria (until the fateful decision to implement the removal policy) provide textbook examples of mission command. The simplicity and clarity of General Crook's orders to his junior officers, as well as the manner in which his command executed their missions certainly deserve study by future leaders trying to understand how the concept of decentralized execution works in practice.

The Apache War still holds many lessons for current leaders. They are just waiting for serious scholarship to assess their implications for modern challenges. Certainly, if that statement holds true for this one conflict, the lessons learned through over a century of warfare to secure the present borders of the United States deserve research, recognition, and inclusion in American doctrine moving forward.

## Notes

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography.)

1 Kakel, Carroll P. III, *The American West and the Nazi East*, p. 3, 5. - Professor Kakel recognizes westward expansion as one of the "...most familiar and overlooked subject[s] in American history." Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, the idea that westward expansion resulted in campaigns of extreme political violence against Native American nations deserves mentioning. Hitler frequently referenced the American model as an analogy for German *Lebensraum*, his quest for living space in the east. I contend that the extreme methods of violence that characterized the Indian Wars, and are sometimes equated with genocide, is one of the primary reasons that the military shies away from dissecting their campaigns. The other primary reason relates to the misperception that they were essentially irrelevant battles. In fact, the Indian Wars required the creation and implementation of complex strategy and innovative tactics that continue to hold relevance today.

2 The United States' involvement in the conflict is generally characterized as beginning in February of 1861 with the Bascom Affair, and concluding in September, 1886 with the formal surrender of Naiche and Geronimo, and accompanying transfer of the Chiricahua-Apache to Fort Marion, Florida. The Mexican government had been fighting the Apache for generations before the United States became involved.

3 Army Field Manual 3-24, acknowledges that counterinsurgency doctrine must be grounded in history, and confirmed through contemporary practices. However, despite the fact that these insights are core tenants of the published doctrine, the authors failed to consider the Apache War (or any of the Indian Wars) anywhere in the 280 page text. In contrast, the doctrine references French experiences in Spain and Algeria sixteen times, and British operations in Ireland and Malaysia twenty-four times.

4 Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. vii and Ball, Eve. *Indeh* - The term Apache actually stems from the Zuni word for "enemy". The bands that make up the Athapascan linguistic group and inhabited Apacheria at the time of contact with Europeans actually referred to themselves as *Indeh*, "the people". Thrapp uses the *N'de* or *Dine* spellings, but I have adopted Eve Ball's phonetic interpretation.

5 Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. vii - viii

6 Ball, Eve. *Indeh*, p. 22; and Barrett, S.M., *Geronimo: His Own Story*, p. 57 and 152; Gardner, Mark. L. *Geronimo: A Biography*, p. 2; and Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. 13-14 - Geronimo (a Bedonkohe) and Daklugie (Juh's son) refer to only the Chokonen when they speak of the Chiricahua. However, they both articulate strong ties between the groups. What's more, the Bedonkohe and Chokonen shared common blood lines. Cochise married the daughter of Mangas Coloradas, making their sons Taza and Naiche half Chokonen and half Bedonkohe. Today, these blood lines are even further blurred as only four true Bedonkohe-Apache survived Geronimo when he passed on February 17, 1909.

7 Crook, George. *His Autobiography*, p. 176-177; Howard, Oliver. O. *Autobiography*, Location 6639 - 64; and Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. 16-17, 77 and later chapters beginning on page 171 - Throughout the early campaigns (pre-1873) many on both sides viewed

Cochise as the principal antagonist. In fact, President Grant sent General Howard to Arizona specifically to make peace with the Chokonon chief. The latter campaigns focused almost entirely on pacifying the Chiricahua groups as they fled the San Carlos reservation.

8 Barrett, S.M., *Geronimo: His Own Story*, p. 181 and Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. 366. - Naiche signed the official treaty on September 4, 1886 as indicated by Geronimo, but technically Mangus (the son of Mangas Coloradas) continued raiding with his group for another month.

9 Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. 363

10 Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P.18.

11 Mort, Terry. *The Wrath of Cochise*. P.8, 231. - Whether John Ward followed their track for any significant distance is unknown. Two days later, LT Bascom also verified the easterly direction of the trail, but at this point it would have been much more difficult to follow. In general, the Apache knew how to evade detection and it is not beyond reason to assume that the Arivaipa purposely laid false spoor to prevent or at least delay pursuit.

12 Mort, Terry. *The Wrath of Cochise*. P. 231 and Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P.14.

13 Mort, Terry. *The Wrath of Cochise*. P. 231

14 Terrell, John U. *The Plains Apache*, p. 16-17, 132-134, 136, 204

15 Mort, Terry. *The Wrath of Cochise*. P. 8 - In 1859, Cochise and his Chokonon executed a raid in the Sonoita Valley and captured several horses which Captain Richard Ewell regained through diplomatic negotiations with Cochise.

16 Barrett, S.M., *Geronimo: His Own Story*, p. 181

17 Mort, Terry. *The Wrath of Cochise*. P. 8-9 and Ball, Eve. *Indeh*, p.25-26. - In many ways this stereo type continues. Although Cochise never exercised influence outside of the Chiricahua, most simple historical narratives view him as the Apache chief.

18 Barrett, S.M., *Geronimo: His Own Story*, p. 65

19 Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P.19. - Sergeant Daniel Robinson's account of the Bascom Affair indicates that on the morning of February 3, 1861 (the same day that Bascom arrived with his company at Apache Pass) he provided a Chokonon with tobacco who approached him offering a trade for a pair of scissors. Sergeant Robinson had traveled to Fort McLane on January 16, 1861 before the raid on John Ward's ranch, but had been warned of possible aggression by the Apache as a result of trouble near Ft Buchanan by a Lieutenant returning from there to Ft McLane.

20 Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P.18

21 Ball, Eve. *Indeh*, p.25. and Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P.18 - This is unlikely though since Bascom reports turning over a woman and two boys as Prisoners to fort Buchanan.

22 Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P.16, 18, and 21. - There are multiple versions of the events, but I have chosen to rely on Edwin Sweeney's analysis as well as after action reports written by Lieutenant Bascom and Sergeant Robinson for this reconstruction.

23 For a full chronology of events, see Appendix.

24 Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P.17. - According to Bascom's report to Lieutenant Colonel Morrison, the hostages were employees of the Butterfield Stage company whom Cochise had previously captured in an attempt to bargain for his family's release.



25 Ball, Eve. *Indeh*, p.25. and Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P. 14-26.

26 Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P. 32.

27 Collins, J.F. *Report to the Secretary of the Interior*. p. 732 - 737. - Interestingly, although word spread rapidly across the commands in the Trans-Mississippi West, there is little evidence to indicate that Washington fully understood the reason that Cochise united the Chiricahua bands, or even understood that they were at war with the Apache. Collins' report to the secretary of the interior indicates that the federal government recognized the Butterfield company's eviction and the removal of the overland mail route as a primary motivation for continued hostilities, but he made no mention as to why Cochise attacked the stage routes in the first place. In fact, his narrative indicates that the Department of Indian Affairs considered the Confederacy to be the root of Apache violence. This may explain why the war department makes no mention of the Bascom Affair in any of their annual reports from 1861.

28 Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P. 28-30.

29 Terry Mort's, *The Wrath of Cochise*, dedicates itself to exactly that task. While it is difficult to rely too heavily on his work by itself due to his lack of citation, Mort's analysis raises critical questions as to why Lieutenant Bascom adopted the course of action that followed.

30 Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P. 21-22.

31 Mort, Terry. *The Wrath of Cochise*. P. 245-246 and Ball, Eve. *Indeh*, p.25-26.

32 Ball, Eve. *Indeh*, p.25-26

33 Mort, Terry. *The Wrath of Cochise*. P. 230. - Mort reproduced Morrison's order number 4 to Lieutenant Bascom, and made a strong case that use of the word instructed likely led Bascom to believe that he had no choice but to use force against Cochise.

34 Mort, Terry. *The Wrath of Cochise*. P. 71.

35 Mort, Terry. *The Wrath of Cochise*. P. 177-185.

36 Davis, Britton, *The Truth about Geronimo*, p. 30-31.

37 Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. 165-166.

38 Barrett, S.M., *Geronimo: His Own Story*, p. 124-125 and Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. 166.

39 Sweeney, Edwin R. *Cochise: Firsthand Accounts*. P. 123 - 124. - Cochise initially sued for peace in 1868 to LTC Thomas Devin. He offered not only to remain at peace himself, but to enforce the other Chiricahua groups to accept peace on the provision their reservation be created on the Chokonon native grounds. Ironically, Cochise also offered to resume responsibility for security of the overland mail at this time as well which would have returned conditions to exactly as they had been in 1861 before the Bascom Affair.

40 Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. 179.

41 Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. 170 and 179. -

42 Kakel, Carroll P. III, *The American West and the Nazi East*, p. 22 and 67.

43 Barrett, S.M., *Geronimo: His Own Story*, p. 57 and 169.

44 Davis, Britton, *The Truth about Geronimo*, p. 30-33.

45 Betzinez, Jason. *I Fought with Geronimo*. P. 54-55.

46 Betzinez, Jason. *I Fought with Geronimo*. P. 54-55; Barrett, S.M., *Geronimo: His Own Story*, p. 125; and Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. 171.

47 Barrett, S.M., *Geronimo: His Own Story*, p. 56 and Ball, Eve. *Indeh*, p.22. - To be fair, the Apache tribal organizations are difficult to trace to this day. For example, Mangas Coloradas,

the Bedonkohe chief until his death in 1863 often gets confused with leading the Mescalero Apache.

48 Ball, Eve. *Indeh*, p.37 - 42.

49 Davis, Britton, *The Truth about Geronimo*, p. 31.

50 Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. 169 - 170.

51 Ball, Eve. *Indeh*, p.37.

52 Thrapp, Dan. L. *The Conquest of Apacheria*, p. 257





## Appendix

### Timeline of Critical Events

#### The Bascom Affair

**1856:** Fort Buchanan established near present day Sonoita Creek.

**1858:** Lieutenant Bascom graduates West Point.

**1859:** Bascom arrives in the Trans-Mississippi West.

**1860:** Bascom joins Lieutenant Colonel Morrison's command at Fort Buchanan.

**1861:**

**JAN:** Arivaipa raid John Ward's ranch in Sonoita, AZ, capturing Felix Ward and twenty head of cattle.

**FEB 3:** Bascom arrives at Apache Pass and organizes a meeting with Cochise.

**FEB 4:** Bascom and Cochise meet; Bascom captures Cochise's family as leverage to ensure Cochise's cooperation.

**FEB 5:** Cochise returns with Apache warriors under a white flag requesting that Bascom release his family; Bascom refused and hostilities initiated. Cochise captured James F. Wallace, one of the Butterfield Stage Company employees, to use as leverage during the fight.

**FEB 7 – 19:** Cochise unites the Chiricahua bands and launches a series of attacks along the stage route and against U.S. targets of opportunity; prior to leaving Apache Pass with the remaining Chiricahua, Cochise kills his hostages. Bascom retaliates by ordering the death of Cochise's brother, nephews, and three other Apache that his command had captured in the previous weeks. He turns over Cochise's family to the guard at Fort Buchanan upon his return from Apache Pass.

## **The Removal Policy**

**1872:** General Oliver Howard establishes peace with Cochise and the Chiricahua.

**1872 – 1873:** General George Crook's offensive successfully pacifies the remaining Apache bands.

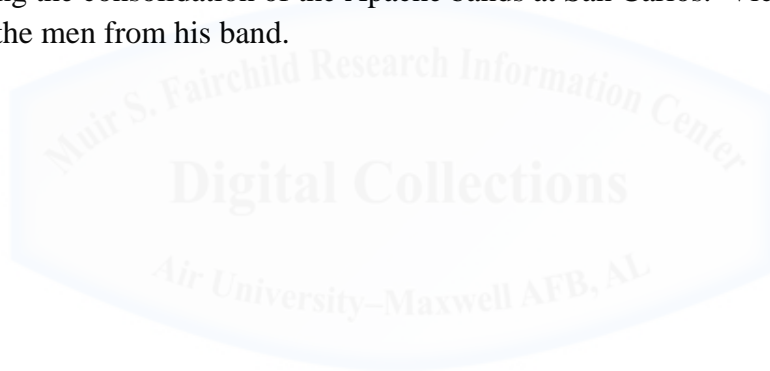
**1874:** Cochise dies and succeeded by his son Taza as chief of the Chokonon Apache.

**1876:** Removal Policy goes into effect.

**JUN 4:** John Clum enters the Apache Pass reservation to effect the transfer of the Chiricahua to San Carlos.

**JUN 12:** John Clum leaves Apache Pass with 325 Chiricahua under Taza; Juh and Geronimo slip off with approximately 400 Chiricahua Apache.

**1878:** Captain Bennett executed the transfer of the Chihenne Apache from Ojo Caliente to San Carlos, completing the consolidation of the Apache bands at San Carlos. Victorio escaped to the Mountains with the men from his band.



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